

Chair Beyer, Vice-Chair Findley, and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy & Environment,

My name is Lydia Heye, and I live in Tigard, Oregon. I urge you to vote yes on House Bill 2475 A as it currently stands and move it forward to the Senate floor with a do pass recommendation. Please do not adopt the “-A11” amendments, which would defeat a major purpose of this bill by substantially limiting intervenor funding for environmental justice stakeholders and existing Public Utility Commission intervenors like the Citizens’ Utility Board.

2020 and 2021 have brought many hardships and challenges to Oregonians, and energy burden was already a major issue before the pandemic struck. Low-income communities, especially those living in rural parts of the state as well as Black, Indigenous, and people of color, have the highest rates of energy burden in Oregon. House Bill 2475 A will allow the Public Utility Commission to adopt rate structures that help solve the issue of unaffordable energy bills while also removing barriers to communities who wish to offer input on energy decision making in Oregon.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the toll it has taken on low-income and communities of color throughout Oregon, it is imperative that we ensure that families are not having to choose between keeping their lights on and food for their families. Utility shut-offs can have a detrimental impact on the health and safety of Oregonians, and so to minimize utility shutoffs, Oregon must take steps to ensure that energy is affordable for everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 2475 A, which passed the House of Representatives with bipartisan support. Please pass this bill as-is onward to the Senate floor for a vote with a do pass recommendation.

Sincerely,

[Name, City/Town, plus any affiliations you want to share]